EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR BOTH: JULIUS ROSENWALD, JIM CROW AND THE CHARLESTON FREE LIBRARY S RECORD OF SERVICE TO BLACKS, 1931 TO 1960

by
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From 1930 to 1935 the Julius Rosenwald Fund supported eleven county library demonstrations in the South, with the aim of establishing a model of county-wide service with equal opportunities for both races. This study examines Charleston Free Library s participation and its aftermath. Though CFL extended service to blacks for the first time, it was unequal to white service and declined further in percentage terms by 1960. The study concludes that CFL s inferior service to African-Americans was caused more by the Jim Crow environment and the worsening of white racial animus, than by variables under the library s control. Since public libraries are creatures of government this suggests the need for further study both to find ways to reduce their political vulnerability and increase their capacity to serve underserved minorities, and to assess the quality of current library service to blacks in Southern jurisdictions with large percentages of black population.

Headings:

Afro-Americans

Blacks and the Library

History Public Libraries

Minorities Library Service

Segregation and the Library

South Carolina Public Libraries

> The study of public administration is often confined to problems which arise in the organization and operation of government agencies. Without questioning the highly important character of such problems or the value of the numerous and intensive inquiries which have been devoted to them, many students are coming increasingly to believe that public administration cannot adequately be considered apart from the other processes of government. [. . .]
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> A most important element in the context of public administration is politics. Roscoe C. Martin (Key v)

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> Most libraries today are creatures of government school district, municipal, county, groups of counties and the future of the library as an institution seems to lie in this direction. (Gleason 50)

Preface

I would like to set beside the quotations that precede the body of this paper three others. The first two are from Master s theses in Library Science or Service written in the mid-1950s; the third is from a journal article. Penelope Hampton Jarrell, in defining the scope of her 1955 study, The Development of the County Library System in South Carolina to1943," said: I shall make no attempt to discuss service to Negroes or school library extension; nor will I be concerned with individual libraries [. . .] (3). Calverta Elnora Davis, in the introduction to her 1958 Survey of the Public Library Service Offered to Negroes in Greenville County, South Carolina, related her discovery that Very limited literature exists on public library services to Negroes in South Carolina (3). Finally, in a 1998 discussion of diversity in law librarianship, Joan S. Howland observed, [M]any authors have approached the issues of recruitment, promotion, and retention almost entirely within the context of the library profession, with little reflection on broader social issues and the history of those issues (563). Taken together, these statements summarize my impetus to undertake the present investigation. The first,

because it reveals a strange Jim Crow mindset: that for analytical or reporting purposes a non-representative part could properly stand for the whole. The second, because it affirms a sad truth, not only in the context of South Carolina libraries but public libraries across the South, which has not greatly changed in the 42 years since its writing.[1] The third, along with the quotations beginning this paper, because they emphasize the importance of examining any institution within the wider context of history and society.

From 1930 to 1935 the Julius Rosenwald Fund supported 11 county library demonstrations in the South, with the aim of establishing a model of county-wide service providing equal opportunities for both races. This study examines Charleston Free Library s[2] record of service to African-Americans[3] both during the Rosenwald period and the 24 years following. Despite a commitment from its trustees to the Julius Rosenwald Fund (Foreman to Foelsch 11/17/30), CFL s initial levels of service to blacks did not equal its service to whites and subsequently failed to attain, or even keep pace with, service to whites through 1960.

Even within the deadening onset of the Great Depression, this brand new public library headquartered in the cosmopolitan enclave of Charleston, South Carolina (Kluger 295), begun in 1930 with the help of $80,000 in Rosenwald matching money,

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[1]) See Graham s 1998 dissertation, quoting Virginia Lacey Jones (11). Two excellent articles have been added to the very small body of work dealing with South Carolina, both by Dan R. Lee. See list of works consulted.

[2]) Charleston Free Library became known as Charleston County Public Library after the period of this study. To save confusion I will refer to it as CFL throughout, except in citing primary source documents currently housed in Charleston County Public Library (CCPL archives).

[3]) The study, when not quoting sources, will use the terms African-Americans and blacks interchangeably. The historical equivalents of these terms utilized by the study s source materials (most of which are contemporaneous with the period covered) are typically colored people or Negroes (with the latter sometimes uncapitalized).

made hopeful initial progress toward its agreed goal of county-wide service to both the black and white, rural and urban citizens of the county. Why did its progress later falter and recede? This paper will attempt to isolate the major causes of its failure to serve blacks equally and in so doing, highlight aspects of the case study that have current relevance to public libraries and point to wider questions needing research.

Background

The all-white bureaucrats, boards and head librarians who designed and administered library service to Negroes [4] in the places where it was offered in the Jim Crow[5] South, invariably differentiated it. It was nearly always physically separate; and the separation itself encouraged, almost dictated, inequality. Whether examining development of Southern library service at the state or local level, one can never automatically assume that such service implied any level of service to the black population. A 1955 survey estimated that 66% of African-Americans in 13 Southern states lacked any library service in 1953; and a 1960 study of 21 Black Belt counties in 19 Southern states found no libraries at all in five, libraries for whites only in 12 others, and separate and inferior facilities for blacks in the remaining five *(Library Journal* 188). Almost two decades earlier Eliza Atkins Gleason, the first African-American woman to receive a Ph.D. in library science, conducted what is still the most detailed study focusing

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3) For an example of the minuscule number of independent black public libraries which existed in the South, see the 1943 article by librarian Bessie Randall-Davis describing her facility, housed in the basement of a church in Tyler, Texas. In her 1941 study Eliza Atkins Gleason listed their total as 12 (81).

4) I use Jim Crow to indicate both a period in Southern history, from the 1890s to about 1964, and the *de jure* and *de facto* system of racial segregation and black disenfranchisement that obtained in the South during that time.

exclusively on public library service to blacks in the South (Graham 15). In the 14 states surveyed she found only three headquarters buildings which admitted blacks without restrictions, while a total of 13 other main libraries admitted them in some compromised fashion. A meager 77 branches provided all other service available to (mostly urban) blacks in the South. In none of the 77 branches was there even a single children s librarian (Gleason 83, 76-7, 148). Gleason ranked South Carolina only above Arkansas and Mississippi in the percentage of blacks served (93). In 1936 Louis Round Wilson and Edward A.Wight concluded from data in a 1935 *Bulletin of the American Library Association*, that Southern Negroes are, generally speaking, without library service, as 80.7 percent of the Negroes in the South have no access whatever to public library facilities (18). In 1938, amplifying his earlier study, Wilson compared available service in 1926 and 1935 and increased this estimate:

> In 1926, in ten southeastern and two southwestern states which generally require separate schools and other institutions for the two races, 866,910 Negroes, or 10.46 per cent of a total population of 8,291,698, received library service from forty-five public libraries; without service there were 7,424,788, or 89.54 per cent. In 1935, 1,592,727, or 18.44 per cent of 8,633,437 were within the service area of seventy-five libraries. There had been an increase of 725,817 in the number served, but this was somewhat offset by an increase of 341,739 in population, which left a total population of 7,040,710, or 81.56 per cent, without service. If data differentiating service to urban and rural Negroes were available, the per cents for the two groups would show still further variation, as provision of libraries for Negroes in rural areas is even more limited than the very inadequate service in cities. Actually the per cents of the population shown as being served by libraries in the Southeast and Southwest should be considered to be lower than they are represented, because service is provided to Negroes in only 75 of the 491 communities which are listed as library service districts. (*Geography of Reading* 33-4)

The Julius Rosenwald Fund

The 1926 figures were those which pertained when the Julius Rosenwald Fund initiated its County Library Demonstration project in 1929. Julius Rosenwald, then the immensely wealthy president of Sears, Roebuck, and Company, started the fund in 1917.

Source: Frontispiece, Embree and Waxman, *Investment in People*.

His charitable interests were far-ranging, but most of his giving centered on African-Americans. The Fund supported improved medical services and fellowships in the arts and sciences for African-Americans, but most of all it supported increased opportunities for basic education, especially in the South. At a time when public education in the South lagged far behind the movement elsewhere, and public education for blacks was almost nonexistent in many parts of the region, the Rosenwald Fund instituted a school building program for Southern blacks on an unprecedented scale. To Rosenwald matching funds was added money raised by a local black community to erect a building, plus the commitment of the local government to maintain the school once built. In this way, with sums from mostly small communities typically gathered in nickels and dimes into some few hundreds of dollars, the Julius

Rosenwald Fund leveraged the building of more than 5,000 schools in 15 states involving a total investment of over $28,000,000 between 1917 and 1932 (Embree and Waxman 37-59). Blacks themselves contributed $4,725,871 to the effort. Thomas W. Hanchett, writing in *The North Carolina Historical Review*, said, the Rosenwald program represented a massive effort to improve black rural schooling in the South through public-private partnership (387). Of the 462 Rosenwald schools in South Carolina, Charleston County had 13, with a total of 40 classrooms (Johnson, *Statistical Atlas* 198).

Rosenwald interest in schools also included higher education, teacher education, and public libraries, which could supplement inadequate school resources. Seventy-eight percent of all Southerners, who formed both the poorest and most rural population among the country s regions (Wilson and Wight 9, 6), were without library service in 1928.

> The Fund saw an opportunity for raising the standards for both races at the same time by initiating a series of demonstrations of county libraries to serve the entire population of the counties aided: rural and urban, Negro and white. These would consist of central libraries in the county seats, branch library stations in schools, churches, stores, and individual homes, and book trucks touring the counties to keep a constant exchange of books among the branch stations and to serve individual readers. To develop this program, appropriations to the counties were begun in 1929 under the following conditions:
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> 1. That the county agree to provide adequate housing and employ trained librarians to direct the work
> 2. That all Fund contributions should be for books and service, not for buildings or equipment (with the exception of trucks)
> 3. That equal service be given to all people of the county (rural and urban, Negro and white) and that the service be adapted to the needs of each group
> 4. That payments from the Fund would be made over a five-year period on a declining scale, and at the end of that time the county would agree to assume full responsibility for the service and maintain it on at least as high a plane for both races as during the period in which aid was received from the Fund. (Embree and Waxman 65-6)

It was not without difficulty that the Rosenwald Fund was able to find (and in three cases, actually help create) eleven libraries in seven Southern states who agreed to join the five-year county library demonstration. Certainly the burgeoning depression didn t help; several governments balked at making the pledge to provide full support at the end of the demonstration. Political concerns and hesitation or unwillingness to give equal service to blacks and whites caused other refusals and false starts (Carmichael 284). During the period from 1929 through 1930, the Fund began supporting library service in the following sites: Walker County, Alabama; Webster Parish, Louisiana; Coahoma County, Mississippi; Davidson and Mecklenburg Counties in North Carolina; Charleston and Richland Counties in South Carolina, Hamilton, Knox and Shelby Counties in Tennessee; and Jefferson County, Texas. And even though these demonstration counties were on aggregate far more urban and affluent than the average Southern county, large drops in local funding forced Coahoma and Mecklenburg Counties out of the project after two years, while Davidson and Walker both lost Rosenwald support for one year (Wilson and Wight 23-4, 47-8, 37, 179). Personalities and politics at the state and local level caused other problems, to which the Fund itself contributed staffing disruptions, inflexibility, flawed conceptualization and too-hasty deployment (Carmichael 284, 325; Wilson and Wight 201). Nevertheless, in 1936 at the end of the demonstration period the foundation felt it had achieved strong success. In 10 counties, service had been extended to 114,237 whites and 140.459 African-Americans. Total circulation had increased from 1,292,664 in 1930 to 6,580,000 in 1935; black circulation had risen from 189,546 to

400,000 (Wilson and Wight, 92, 220; Embree and Waxman 66-7[6]).

South Carolina

In the poorest region in the U.S., South Carolina in 1930 barely hovered above bottom-dwelling Mississippi, with an average annual per capita income of $242[7] (Economagic.com). In 1931 its spending on education was $6.24 per person, fourth lowest among the 48 states (Wilson 286). Its population of 1,738,765 was 78.7% rural, 54.2% white and 45.6% black, while 52.6% lived on farms (*Fifteenth Census*).

In his pioneering 1914 survey arguing for the establishment of public libraries, University of South Carolina librarian R. M. Kennedy noted that in 1909 there had been only three free libraries (as public libraries were then known) in the state, one being the Carnegie Library at Benedict College, Columbia [, . . .] used almost exclusively by negroes. In the interim five additional free libraries had been created (all serving whites only) (3). Under the dynamic leadership of Charlotte Templeton[8] Greenville public became the first library in the state to extend service to blacks and also county-wide, in 1926 (Frayser 19-20; Lee *Segregation to Integration* 95). Beginning in 1903 and spurred in the aftermath of the Kennedy report, the state passed a series of increasingly comprehensive laws first enabling towns, then school districts and finally counties to establish public libraries and authorizing local tax levies up to 2 mils to fund them. It

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[6]) The authors err in saying, on page 67, that black circulation in 1935 increased by 200 % over the previous year. In fact, circulation among African-Americans rose by slightly more than 200% over the five-year period. White circulation increased by 560%.

[7]) Which, by 1932, had dropped to $158 its lowest point.

[8]) Templeton later become the first dean of Atlanta University s School of Library Service.

was, however, only in 1929 that the legislature created a state library board to support and extend local service, though it would make no appropriation for the state board until 1943 (Frayser, 19-21; E. Walker 3-6). In her 1933 survey of the state s public libraries (two years into the Rosenwald demonstration period), Mary Frayser reported only three libraries in the state giving full County service: Charleston, Greenville and Richland. She did not break out library service to blacks *per se*, but her assessment of South Carolina s school libraries was a stark indicator of their plight. Using figures from the State Department of Education, she showed that while 39% of white elementary schools possessed libraries, only 8.9% of black elementary schools had them. And whereas 86.3% of white high schools had libraries, only 20.5% of black high schools had them. Further, she noted that:

> There are 304 accredited and 39 non-accredited white and four accredited and 211 non-accredited negro high schools in South Carolina. A shortage of library books is a factor in the non-accredited high school situation. (25, 28-9)

In a 1947-48 survey of nine southeastern states, out of 260 reporting black high school libraries, only 36 (13.8%) met the five quantitative standards set by the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. In South Carolina, among 46 reporting black high school libraries only two (4.3%) met the standards, while the figures for the state s white high schools were 143 and 40 (28%), respectively (*Libraries of the Southeast* 87).

Charleston County

Charleston County is located on the coast in the Low Country, that part of the state below the fall line which was then sparsely settled and rather feudally agricultural. One hundred thirty miles long, with an area of 923 square miles, it was the largest of the 11 counties originally included in the Rosenwald demonstration. The county s population in 1930 was 101,050, while its county seat was the largest city in the state, with a population of 62,265. Rural dwellers made up only 38.4% of the county populace. In Charleston County as a whole blacks numbered 54,812 or 54.2%. In the city of Charleston whites predominated at 54.9%, while blacks comprised 69.0% of the county s rural citizenry. Since the 1920 census the county had lost 6,800 in population, while the African American population had decreased by nearly 10,000 as part of a general outmigration of Southern blacks in search of better jobs (*Fifteenth Census*). Pre-war Charleston has been described as sleepy, aristocratic, and isolated (Kluger 295, Key 137). James Carmichael quotes Tommie Dora Barker, the ALA s Southern Regional Field Agent who while conducting site evaluations of the county demonstrations for the Rosenwald Fund concluded that if Charleston [has] a free library, it will be very much on its own terms (308).

Charleston s new public library was hardly a virgin exercise. The first public library in America was established in Charles Town in 1698 by act of the General Assembly and it lasted into the early 18th century. In 1748 17 white Charlestonians organized the Charles Town Library Society, a dues-paying society which pooled members money to purchase books (E. Walker 1-2, Copp 18). In 1830 Charleston free

blacks organized the Bonneau Library Society to commemorate a revered black teacher, Thomas S. Bonneau (L. Walker 88-9). The Charleston Library Society persists today as a private society. The Library Society turned down a Carnegie offer of assistance in 1905 out of a desire not to admit blacks. Dan Lee quotes from the letter sent to Carnegie by the Society s President:

> [I]n a mixed community such as Charleston, it is believed that however small a tax might be levied for the library, the smallest colored tax payer would have legal rights of admission, which could hardly be avoided. As this is undesirable in every way, taxation could not well be resorted to [. . .]

Six years later a successor president reaffirmed to Carnegie the Library Society s continued resistance to the idea of a public library (Segregation to Integration 96). And yet again, when approached by a Civic Club delegation in 1916 simply requesting the establishment of a free reading room, the Library Society declined (Pollitzer 2).[9]

The Creation of Charleston Free Library

White Charleston clubwomen had supported the establishment of a free library since the early twentieth century (Pollitzer 1). Civic Club members Clelia P. McGowan and Mabel L. Pollitzer both played central roles in creating and then securing county funding for the Charleston Free Library. McGowan was a suffragette leader and the first woman to hold public office in South Carolina. In 1923 she ran for and was elected to the Board of Aldermen on the platform, A free library for Charleston (Verner).

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[9]) Quite ironically, in 1876 the Library Society s then librarian Arthur Mazyck had written:

> [. . .] and we must say with regret that nothwithstanding the occasional instances of favorable progress [. . .] a view of the condition of public libraries in the Southern States presents after all but a barren prospect. In proportion to the population their number is exceedingly small, they are poorly supported; are conducted on no general or fixed system, and are confined usually to the large cities, while the smaller communities in these States are, for the most part, absolutely destitute of this most necessary means of education and refinement. (Gleason, quoting from *Public Libraries in the United States* 1890)

Pollitzer, a teacher, was chairman of the Charleston County Teachers Association (Pollitzer 2; Pollitzer *et al* to Legare).

Less often credited, Susan Dart Butler, a black Charlestonian, also played a pivotal role, sparking Rosenwald interest through her own library work in the African-American community several years prior to the creation of CFL.[10] Educated at Atlanta University, Butler was the eldest of five children of a prominent black educator, the Rev. John Lewis Dart. Books had been an integral part of her growing up (L. Walker 90). McGowan met Butler in the mid-twenties through their involvement with the Charleston Interracial Commission.[11] After learning from McGowan in 1925 that the Rosenwald Fund was interested in starting libraries for blacks, Butler first surveyed materials in her community. Finding the few books available were poor and of no value, in 1927 Butler, with community help, opened a reading room with donated books in a small inky office next to her father s old print shop. She said:

> There was a real need for such a project, and it was ever before me. One cold night before this survey was made, a young high school girl attending Avery

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[10]) Two sources which do credit Butler adequately and shed more light on her role are those by Mary Emily Riley and Lillie S. Walker (see List of Works Consulted).

[11]) The Interracial Commission was founded in 1919 by three white Southerners to combat racial tension and violence, which rose sharply after the Armistice. It had biracial membership and local and state affiliates, of which Charleston was one.) In 1940, writing of the Charleston Interracial Committee s accomplishments, McGowan would say:

> In the county, schools have been built where none was before; other schools have been improved; libraries have been opened to rural Negroes; an agricultural society has been organized. But the greater evidences of improved race relations are found in Charleston proper. Playgrounds, a swimming pool, kindergartens, boys and girls clubs, personal relief work, all have been fostered by the race relations committee and accomplished thro [sic] cooperation with proper agencies.
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> The latest and most important achievement is the establishment of a Negro Welfare Center in the fine Shaw school building in Charleston. [. . .] The Committee observes Race Relations Sunday one year in a Negro church with a white speaker, and the next in a white church with a Negro speaker. (*The Southern Frontier* 10/40, 4/40).

> came to my house to inquire as to whether I had the poems of Shelley and Keats and their biographies.
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> My father, the Rev. John L. Dart, D.D., had collected a large number of books for his library, and I knew these books were among them. The girl went with me to his library, which was on the first floor of Dart Hall and used at that time by my husband as an office since the passing of my father in 1915.
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> The room was very cold, but the girl said she did not mind the cold. She would rather sit there and read because at her home, a small cottage, there were her sister s young children playing and older folks talking which made it hard for her to concentrate on her work.
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> This picture was always in front of my eyes. I knew her situation and though [sic] of many others like her. (Butler)

Butler volunteered her time at the Dart library, investing three hours on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays after a full day s work teaching kindergarten. Her pioneering work intensified the interest of the Julius Rosenwald Fund.

> One day we had some very distinguished men from Atlanta to visit the library: they were Edwin Embree, Clark Foreman and Mr. Howell. They were interested in our library and pleased with the collection of books covering such a wide variety of subjects. [. . .]
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> Mr. Embree, who represented the Julius Rosenwald Foundation, was interested in public libraries, and a five-year plan was discussed with Charleston County officials. People talked about and visited the library from that day on. (Butler)

Embree was president of the Rosenwald Fund and Foreman would become the program officer for the county library demonstration project. Butler maintained the reading room for four years. It would finally be folded into CFL as the main Colored Branch in July 1931, with Butler as assistant librarian. Citing Lillie S. Walker, Dan Lee says, The work of McGowan and Butler, both members of the Inter-Racial Commission, became instrumental in securing Rosenwald funding for the county in 1930" (Segregation to Integration 95).

Another major player was Laura Bragg, the first female director of the Charleston

Museum, the oldest in America. She is both tantalizingly present and then absent from the accounts of the beginnings of the library. Present because she was a vivid and important personage in the cultural life of Charleston, who had put their museum on the national map with her famous Bragg Boxes, compact travelling exhibits which went to children in remote areas. Present also because she had a relationship with Clark Foreman that predated his joining the Rosenwald Fund and taking on the county library demonstration project (Allen 240, Embree to Smith 4/29/30). Bragg, who had library training, agreed not only to provide temporary housing for the new library in the museum, but to become its head. Yet soon absent, because she left in 1931 only six months after the library s opening to become director of a Massachusetts museum, an unexpected move which threw the fledgling organization into some confusion (Allen 289, Minutes 6-16-31, 9-15-31, 10-7-31).

With the way having been paved by Clelia McGowan, Susan Dart Butler, and Laura Bragg (Pollitzer 2), the Julius Rosenwald Fund visited Charleston County in 1929, met with interested citizens and subsequently made an offer to the county to provide matching funds for five years if the county would support the creation of a library for both races and assume fiscal responsibility for its continuation after Rosenwald funding ended. The county legislative delegation turned the offer down (Pollitzer 2). Spearheaded by the Charleston Civic Club, the library s proponents continued their efforts to create a broad base of support, gaining the endorsements of over 23 civic organizations (Unititled ts.). Finally after intensive lobbying and exploitation of the old boy-girl network and a petition drive, the county delegation accepted the Rosenwald offer in late March of 1930, at an

advantageous matching ratio higher than at any of the other demonstration sites: a two-to-one match from Rosenwald the first two years, a one-to-one match the third and fourth year, and a one-to-two match the fifth year (Riley 5, 4; Wilson and Wight 165). The county[12] would appropriate $10,000 for each of the first two years, $15,00 for the third and fourth year, and finally $20,000 for the fifth year. The total offered (and appropriated) by Rosenwald for the five years is usually put at $80,000.[13]

The library incorporated via state charter as an independent corporation in May 1930 (Riley 35-6). If the founders had chosen to create CFL under the state library law its board would have been limited to five members appointed by the County Board of Education (*Acts and Joint Resolutions* 181-5). Under the charter, the board elected its own members and their number was not fixed. The trustees at the time of the incorporation were: Mary V. McBee, Homer M. Pace, Charles B. Foelsch, Clelia P. McGowan, Matthew A. Condon, Laura M. Bragg and Sidney Rittenberg (Riley 6). McBee, a native North Carolinian and Smith College graduate, was the founder and principal of Ashley Hall, a private girls school. Pace, also a North Carolina transplant, was a vice president of South Carolina Power Company. Foelsch, pastor of St. Andrew s Lutheran Church and first president of the board, was a more thorough outsider, a Midwesterner whose first three pastorates had been in Pennsylvania. Condon, a department-store owner and realtor, was second-generation Irish-American and an active

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[12]) The city of Charleston earlier had refused to participate and has never directly supported the library except via county taxes paid by city residents (Riley 5).

[13]) Embree and Waxman list the total spent as $87,000 (265). This may include money separately appropriated to the Charleston Museum.

Catholic (Lesesne 352-3, 302-3, 203, 173-4). Rittenberg[14] was a prominent Charleston attorney who served as the board s solicitor. Later in the year four more trustees would be added: Paul McMillan, Judge of Civil and Criminal Court; Henry Strohecker, president of the State Teachers Association; Thomas J. Waring, editor of the Charleston *News and Courier*; and teacher Mabel Pollitzer. The trustees also decided to make *ex officio* members both the president of the Board of Trustees of the Charleston Museum, and the state Senator from Charleston County (Minutes 6/5/30, 6/18/30).

Not enough is known about these individuals to characterize the political and racial attitudes of the board as a whole. Certainly, McGowan s long-standing local and regional activity with the Interracial Commission would make her a liberal of her time. Trustee-librarian Bragg, who also continued to direct the museum, had already for several years been involved with McGowan (and later the Rosenwald Fund) in sending out travelling libraries to black schools through the museum. Even so she had race-related doubts about the wisdom of the museum s association with the new library. In 1929 she had written Foreman, As it is, I very greatly appreciate your good will and what may come from this, I nevertheless feel that the burden of handling the colored problem is much a serious one [sic] that the harm to the Museum in the struggle will more than offset any benefit (Allen 241). *News and Courier* editor Waring was (or would

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[14]) A curious footnote: Sidney Rittenberg s son, also Sidney Rittenberg, is:

> the only American, living or dead, who has been personally acquainted with China's leaders from Mao Zedong to the current President Jiang Zemin and Premier Zhu Rongji. Born in Charleston, S.C., he graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with a degree in philosophy. In World War II, the U.S. Army made use of Rittenberg's aptitude for language and sent him to Stanford University to learn Chinese. He went to China with the military in the mid-1940s and stayed to embrace the cause of the communist revolution. He lived alongside the revolutionaries and was invited into their inner circles of power. His book "The Man Who Stayed Behind" details his extraordinary experiences in China. Rittenberg and his wife, Yulin, returned to the U.S. in 1979, and are now consultants to American companies that want to do business in China. (http://carbon.cudenver.edu/public/inst_intl_bus/gef/issues/99aug/china.html)

become) an extreme white supremacist whose paper played a divisive role in exacerbating anti-black sentiment in the state (Quint vi, 27). Tommie Dora Barker found the Trustees as a group parsimonious, as well as inbred, self-contained, and completely independent of alien events and influences (Carmichael 308).

The Rosenwald funds were not formally committed until the board s November 1930 meeting (Foreman to Foelsch). In the meantime Carnegie had promised to grant the new library $35,000 to purchase books (Foelsch to Keppel). In less than a month from the time she had the county and Rosenwald monies in hand, Laura Bragg completed preparation of the museum space, and the Charleston Free Library opened its doors to the public on the night of January 1, 1931 (Library Celebration).

The terms of the agreement between the Trustees and the Julius Rosenwald Fund were neither definitively spelled out nor put into contract form.[15] Except as dealing with the matching funds, they were rather general and were expressed slightly differently at different times. On March 4 1929, for example, the *Charleston Evening Post* quoted verbatim from the Rosenwald offer:

> [. . .] it being further understood that the service shall include white and colored with equal opportunities for both and with facilities adapted to the needs of each. It is further understood that the funds referred to above are intended for county-wide service and that a central building or buildings for both white and colored shall be provided from other funds. (Riley 4-5)

Clark Foreman in his official notification of the Fund s grant to CFL followed this language exactly, except to substitute, a central building for both white and colored shall

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[15]) Nowhere in the sources I reviewed is such a contract referred to. The only project contracts appear to have dealt specifically with service to schools in the Tennessee sites. Wilson and Wight reproduce these contracts in Appendix A (232-6).

be provided from other funds. Elsewhere in the letter he added:

> [. . .] the Fund s support during these beginning years is considered only on the expectation that after this initial period the county will carry the entire support and maintain the service at an increasingly high standard. (Foreman to Foelsch 11/17/30)

Three days later Foreman wrote the board president that, The officers are willing to make this appropriation to the Charleston Free Library on the terms agreed upon by us before and stipulated in my letter to you of November 17" (Foreman to Foelsch 11/20/30).

In any case, the Rosenwald terms left the whites sufficient wiggle room to segregate library services (as was also done in the ten other county demonstrations). It is probable that this was subtly intentional on the part of the Fund, given the political and social attitudes among Southern whites of the time and its desire to have the demonstrations succeed and provide a model of increased service to blacks and rural dwellers.[16] In any case, the proof was in the pudding. Clark Foreman attended the library board meeting two days before its January 1 opening. The board reported that: The central branch would be used by the county until the county branches were opened. These and the negro branches were expected to be in operation by April fifteenth. Later in the meeting when Foreman was asked if the Rosenwald Fund would approve of opening the negro library on April 15th, he responded that the Fund had perfect confidence in the Trustees (Minutes 12/30/30). Although Tommie Dora Barker, evaluating the library for Rosenwald, would wrangle with the board over issues of

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[16]) See Graham s discussion of this issue in relation to Rosenwald efforts in Alabama (96).

staffing, salaries, organization and county service, Foreman s response seems to typify the attitude which prevailed at the Fund towards the Charleston project. The only instance of Rosenwald criticism regarding CFL s service to African-Americans that has been preserved in the library s records is a 1934 letter from S. L. Smith, director for the Fund s Southern Office in Nashville, to Parmelee Cheves, CFL s chief librarian from 1932 to 1939. Smith wrote:

> Now that the depression is over, I am wondering if it will not be possible for the county library demonstrations to bring up the services for Negroes to a more satisfactory level both in personnel and in book stock, in order that the demonstration may be satisfactory. I am wondering what plans you have in mind for this, and want to assure you that both Miss Barker and I will be glad to do whatever we can to help you in this matter.

Service to African-Americans

In terms of this study, library service is defined as being composed of these measurable elements: number and type of service points, hours of service, available bookstock, number and training of personnel, and programming. Data that are plentiful and easy to analyze are available for most of these categories, due in part to the Jim Crow practice of keeping racially separate statistics. In addition, circulation and registration figures are included as second-tier indicators of service. For several reasons linked to factors that may not readily be apparent or even ascertainable, most of which Wilson and Wight discuss, circulation and registration are somewhat less reliable measures of service (71-3, 91-9).[17] Numerical data are not available for all of the years covered, but their lack

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[17]) Budget cuts affected circulation; also some demonstration libraries limited the number of books which a borrower could withdraw, while others did not. Different rules in the different counties governed registration: in some school children were registered, in others not, etc.

had no significant effect on the study. Additionally this paper evaluates primary source evidence from CFL documents and clippings files from the Charleston County Public Library archives and the South Carolina State Center for Archives and History.

Earlier this paper mentioned the peculiar white mindset that confronts any investigator of Jim Crow records with an interpretive perplex: it is often contextually impossible to determine whether the statement X service is available to all actually meant X is available to all blacks and whites on an equal footing or, X is available freely to whites but to blacks on a more limited basis, or, X is available only to whites. Often administrators making such statements (typically in reports and press releases) were themselves unaware from which side of their partitioned minds they were speaking. All too frequently in place of the whole they substituted only a part.[18]

Early Years: The Rosenwald Period

At the end of the library s first year and a half, equal opportunities to both had resulted in: (for whites) a main library facility open for 68 hours weekly, four branches open a total of 44 hours, partial use of a booktruck, and a bookstock of 13,398 volumes plus 92 periodicals and six newspapers; and (for blacks) a single central negro branch open for 68 hours weekly, partial use of a booktruck, and a bookstock of 4,641 volumes plus 11 periodicals and three newspapers (Annual Report 1932, [Mathewes] 4-5). Clelia Mathewes further stated in her narrative Annual Report for 1931" that two additional black branches had been opened in July, on Society Street and on Edisto Island, but

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[18]) An embarrassing case in point: in separate reports on facing pages in its 1949-50 annual report, the South Carolina State Library Board states, successively: In 14 counties negroes have book service; and, Today South Carolina has thirty-six counties with full rural service [3-4]. If the first statement is true, the second cannot be. But it is rare indeed that context supplies such a definitive cross-check.

because of poor circulation[19] and lack of interest among the negroes, respectively, they had been closed in November and December 1931 (6). Staff for the white facilities totalled eight full-time and four part-time library workers plus a janitor (librarian, three department heads, four branch librarians and four assistants). Staff for the black facility included two full-time library workers plus a janitor (one librarian and one assistant). Circulation among blacks for the year ending November 30, 1932, was 32,202, or 13.9% of the total figure (Annual Report 1932). It should be remembered that blacks comprised 54.2% of the population.

Located at the corner of Kracke and Bogard Streets, Dart Hall, which housed Susan Dart Butler s reading room for the community, became the central negro branch. Butler s father had built the structure in 1895 as part of a school. The Dart family agreed to rent three large rooms for use as a library to CFL for a dollar a year (*1931-1981* n. pag). Apparently the Trustees hadn t considered Dart Hall entirely adequate as a site, because they approached the Phelps-Stokes Foundation in the fall of 1930 to request funds for a building (Minutes 10/2/30), but made no further efforts in this direction.

The entropy which followed Laura Bragg s June departure included Dart. Bragg s handpicked successor proved to be an incapable administrator. Tommie Dora Barker recommended that the trustees hire Tampa librarian Helen Virginia Stelle who came on temporary assignment at the end of December 1931 to straighten out the mess (Minutes 10/7/31). Stelle found Dart Hall in a deplorable condition, with inaccurate records and files in confusion. She felt the Dart librarian was incompetent and that librarian was

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[19]) The Minutes show that the Society Street branch was closed for budgetary reasons (10/7/31).

dismissed in June. Meanwhile Susan Butler took a summer course at the Library School of Hampton Institute and became the Dart branch librarian when she returned. In the interim Stelle shifted Dart s cataloging work to the main building, where it became permanently housed. Stelle s recommendations for Dart included enlarging the collection with an emphasis on children s books (Stelle 7-9). Before leaving at the end of her six-months assignment, Stelle individually evaluated CFL staff. After judging that Butler would make a capable librarian for the Dart Hall branch, Stelle perhaps condescendingly observed, She will be able to keep simple records. The technical side of library work will always be too complicated for her to master. [20] Stelle goes on to remark: Her chief qualifications for library work are: Dignity and self-respect; interest in Library and community; sympathetic understanding of her race; and ability to work with the Head Librarian in the right spirit (Personnel section [3]). The last qualification speaks volumes to those of us who grew up in the Jim Crow South. Susan Butler would remain as the Dart branch librarian until her retirement in 1957 (*1913-1981 Charleston County Library*).

At the end of the Rosenwald years (the 1935-36 reporting year, the third straight in which South Carolina per capita income had risen (Economagic.com)), CFL black service indicators revealed: a bookstock of 10,812, now slightly reduced proportionally to 24.96% of the total bookstock; circulation of 57,912, which had risen to 17.34% of total

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[20]) Stelle may have been reinforcing a stereotype. In Race in American Librarianship... Rosemary R. DuMont notes:

> Because public library service for blacks was conducted through branches, administered by the main library, classification and cataloging of books as well as much administrative work was out of the control of the librarians of the branches. [. . .]Therefore, [in] the curriculum recommended for blacks wishing to work in public library service [. ..] [l]ittle emphasis was placed on technical or administrative work. (492)

circulation; and registration of 4,605, an increase to 28.8% of the total. Whites now had access to 142 periodicals and seven newspapers, while blacks had access to 16 periodicals and four newspapers. In numbers, the bookstock for blacks had more than doubled but volumes for whites had increased at an even higher rate. (See chart and table, pages 34-5.) There were still one main (now much improved) facility[21] plus four branches for whites, open for a total of 110 hours which had decreased by two; and one branch for blacks, open for a total of 48 hours, which had decreased by 24. Excluding janitors, white library staff now totalled 14, with four part-time, an increase of two full-time workers. Black library staff now totalled three, one full-time and two part-time. The black FTE was probably two, so there appears to be no net increase in black staff person-hours (Annual Report 1936).[22] In terms of staffing, hours of opening, and percentage of bookstock, blacks had lost ground in the interim. Dan Lee quotes the seemingly obvious statement made by Emily Amelia Copeland in an unpublished 1947 report to the Negro Advisory Committee of the Southern States Cooperative Library Survey Committee: in spite of the fact that Negro public libraries are branches, they are the main libraries for the Negro population and should provide service as complete as a main library does (From Segregation to Integration 98). In 1932, in allocating equal hours of opening to both the main facility and Dart, the Trustees seemed to have implicitly grasped this truth, but by 1936 it had escaped them.

Service to blacks in Charleston County during the Rosenwald period, as in the

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[21]) In 1934 he trustees relocated the main library from the museum to better quarters in a house on Rutledge Avenue which they purchased and remodeled in 1934.

[22]) From the Rosenwald-era reporting forms one can roughly deduce hours from the salary amounts listed.

other demonstration counties, made real strides from zero to a place on the charts. The Rosenwald goals were fuzzy, and the relationship of Rosenwald staff to CFL, at least, does not seem to have been significantly hortatory in respect to black service levels. Discussing Service to Negroes in the Rosenwald Demonstrations in *Libraries of the South* (1936), Tommie Dora Baker found: That progress in some cases has been noteworthy but that no one of the counties has worked out a thoroughly satisfactory system of distribution of books to Negroes; and that no county has a satisfactory collection of books for serving Negro citizens, the number in each of the four largest collections being approximately 10,000 volumes and in no case is the per cent of the total book stock for Negroes over 24 per cent (52).

The Post-Rosenwald Era to 1960

As noted earlier, the South Carolina State Library Board wasn t funded until 1943. Individual libraries began consistently reporting to the State Board around this time, as their statistics appear in the Library Board s annual reports which began in 1944. No state report survives for Charleston County until the reporting period of 1946-47; CFL statistics found in the record for the period between 1936 and 1946 are not comprehensive or categorically consistent from year to year. Other reports and anecdotal information do exist, however, and begin to appear more plentifully in the record starting around 1940. Much more information is available on programming beginning at this time.

Emily Sanders replaced Parmelee Cheves as CFL s librarian in August 1940. Remarkably, she would serve as the library s director until 1978 (*1931-1981 Charleston County Library*). One can say that it is on her watch that most of this story plays out,

yet the implications of such a statement would be simplistic and misleading. Even the collective character of the Board, about which little is known, was probably also less than decisive in shaping the library s history of service to African-Americans. Other variables, more pandemic and powerful, were also part of the picture.

That being said, it should be noted that longevity of membership among CFL s Trustees was quite remarkable. A 1948 list shows seven of the 11 members elected in 1930-31 (exclusive of those who were ex-officio) still active; with original trustee Mary V. McBee as president (Board of Trustees 5/13/48). McBee, Judge Paul McMillan and Mabel Pollitzer remained active trustees in 1959 (Members of the Board of Trustees 7/30/59).

Native South Carolinian Emily Sanders had a library certificate from Pratt Institute and an A.B. in Sociology with a minor in Library Science from the University of North Carolina. She also (perhaps while in Charleston) studied personnel and finance administration through the International City Managers Association. During her tenure at CFL she was active in professional circles, becoming a president of the state association and a member of the executive board of the Southeastern Library Association. An Episcopalian[23] and founding member of the Charleston County League of Women Voters, in 1962 Sanders professed interest in, among other topics: adult discussion groups, library building planning, poetry, dance, music and gardening (Résumé 9/62). She appears to have been a Jimmy Carter-type administrator who paid great attention to details. For example, in a 1945 statistical report Sanders submitted to the U.S. Office of

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[23]) Charleston s most socially advantageous denomination.

Education, a starred note for the total expenditures figure of $32,794.02 reads: Includes 20¢ paid, over deducted, of Withholding Tax (Public Library Statistical Report 8/45).

This study will examine post-Rosenwald service in three areas particularly, rural service, service to schools, and programming, before turning briefly to look at staff training and salaries and trends in the areas compared during the county demonstration period. The study will also examine the incentive and leadership, or lack thereof, supplied by the federal WPA State Library Extension program from 1935 to 1943 and by the South Carolina State Library Board. The study then will move on to examine some overarching variables beyond the library s control which it concludes had a significant effect on CFL s service to blacks. Finally it will look at implications of its findings for the current role and dependent status of public libraries as creatures of government.

When she noted that no one of the [demonstration] counties has worked out a thoroughly satisfactory system of distributing books to African Americans, Tommie Dora Barker probably had in mind, along with other issues, that of rurality (52).[24] Blacks made up the majority of the rural population in five of the eleven counties. In the 1930s, 40s, and 50s rural areas in the South were much more isolated and rugged than they are today. It was a challenge to find satisfactory housing and custodians for [book] stations and in 130-mile-long Charleston County few of the roads were paved (Wilson and Wight,

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[24]) Indeed she did, as Wilson and Wight make clear. They plagiarized exactly the sentence I quote from (undoubtedly from her unpublished evaluative reports to the Rosenwald Foundation which would have been available to them) and go on to discuss various difficulties, such as higher rates of illiteracy among blacks, school and home conditions not conducive to reading, and the tradition of minimal or no schooling favored by white Southerners in slavery times (then less than 70 years distant) (68).

68, 40). During the Rosenwald era circulation was generally low among both rural blacks and whites. The per-capita circulation by race and area for Charleston County in 1934 is reported in the following table (Wilson and Wight 96):

CFL Per-Capita Circulation by Race and Area - 1934			
White		Black	
Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
5.3	5.7	1.1	0.3

Per-capita circulation for rural whites in Charleston County was higher than for urban whites.[25] Yet in virtually every county the percentage of rural black circulation was extremely low, almost inversely proportional to blacks percentage of the population. The Charleston County figures were particularly poor (Wilson and Wight 95). Strategically located branches, with regular weekly schedules of opening, seem to have made the difference, with bookmobile service as a lesser factor. On the Charleston County map reproduced on the next page, probably created in 1934, the optimal geographic dispersal of the four white branches is evident. Distribution to rural blacks was effected almost exclusively by means of box deposits in stores, churches and private homes, as well as in some schools. This study has found no comprehensive lists or details of these box deposits, which probably changed from year to year and kept infrequent and inconstant hours. Neither has it found mention of how, or if, they were publicized. After the Rosenwald period, Charleston County no longer kept circulation statistics divided by area.

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[25]) A pattern that actually held true for whites in three of the demonstration counties.

Source: Wilson

The Rosenwald Fund had emphasized work with schools. Although CFL did not have a contract to service schools as some demonstration libraries did, by 1933 Charleston had book deposits in 21 black and two white schools (Annual Report 1932-33). By 1934 it was probably serving all black schools in the county (Annual Report 1933-34). In 1941 Emily Sanders noted to the U.S. Office of Education that the 64 Negro schools of the county are entirely dependent on the Free Library for reading material (Sanders to Dunbar). Which meant that those schools did not have libraries of their own. Small collections were placed in each school near the beginning of the school year (Sanders, To the Board of Trustees). In 1945 the CFL Children s Department began a limited amount of work with white elementary city schools. [. . .] similar to work already being done by the Dart librarian with city colored schools, elementary and high (Minutes 10/23/45). A 1946 CFL draft report noted that in the city:

> Special emphasis is laid on work with Negro schools, elementary, high and parochial. For a year and a half units have been carried monthly on request to schools. Teachers and pupils use and depend largely on the Library (Dart Hall Branch, and Shaw Center) for reference and supplementary reading. The books at Dart Hall are the only source in the city for material for teachers use in summer school courses conducted for Negro teachers, and for other extension courses. (City Schools)

Apparently the delivery of monthly units on request was not a service extended to black schools in the county (Untitled ts. 3/21/47).[26] In the area of service to schools, undoubtedly prompted by the Rosenwald Fund, CFL began its work with black schools earlier and on a more inclusive scale.

It is difficult to determine with accuracy the degree to which programming was

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[26]) The Charleston city school system contained only a handful of black schools.

extended equally to blacks and whites.[27] We know that CFL sponsored weekly story hours for both black and white children, as well as children s summer reading programs with games and graduations (Untitled ts. 3/21/47). Beyond that the investigator must resort to flying on blunt instruments through a very murky atmosphere.[28] We know, for example, that neither the Library s biweekly Great Books discussion program nor a music appreciation program were available to blacks (Free Library Plans Seminar ; Sanders, To the Board of Trustees 5), although monthly book discussions were held at Dart (photograph: Book Week Program at Dart Hall Branch). Altogether there is not enough unambiguous evidence to support a certain conclusion, it is highly probable, especially when considered in light of the evidence from other service areas, that there was also significant inequity in CFL s programming for blacks.

Staffing for service to blacks was extremely unequal in relation to their proportion of the population. In 1951 when blacks comprised 41.5 % of the county s population, CFL employed six blacks and 28 whites, excluding janitorial staff (*Seventeenth Census*; Staff Members August 1"). Blacks, of course, did not work in technical services but only in the provision of direct service.[29] Moreover, four of the six blacks were part-time (66.6%) while only 16 of the 28 whites were part-time (57.1 %). Salaries for black employees were certainly lower (National Urban League) and probably inequitable,

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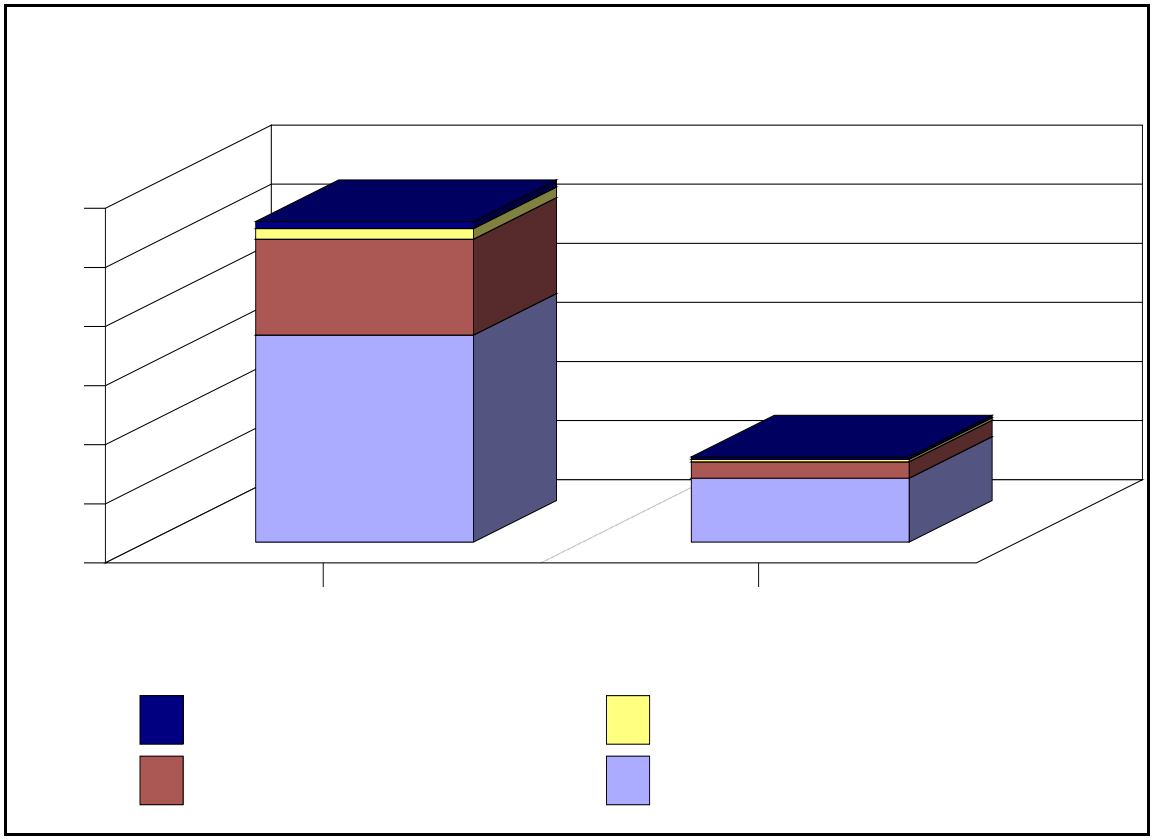
[27]) In two large scrapbooks containing about 150 newspaper clippings for the period, for example, programming for blacks is seldom mentioned directly. If the article reported the main library as the location for a given program, without qualification, then one can infer it was not available to blacks. The practice in reportage seems to have been that if such a program was also available for blacks, that information was included in the article (Scrapbooks).

[28]) Mixed metaphor intended.

[29]) CFL s practice was to hire only black employees to work directly with black patrons; to an unknown extent, the white Children s Librarian and Reference Librarian also worked with black patrons.

although it is hard to compare them on the basis of equal training, as in almost every case black employees had less (CFL County or Regional Statistical Report). CFL had a rather limited general policy of providing a few weeks leave with pay for employees to take courses in librarianship. For example in the summer of 1947 Colored County Librarian Mae Purcell studied for 12 weeks at North Carolina College for Negroes. Six of those weeks were leave with pay, three were paid vacation, and the remaining three were uncompensated (Minutes 10/29/47). Adding this kind of economic disincentive for continuing education to the issue of unequal pay, it is easy to understand the conclusion of a 1946 Urban League survey of CFL that there is little inducement for [Negro librarians] to complete their training (National Urban League Recommendations).

Racial staffing inequity was tied to the inequity in black branch facilities. And there were inequities in other geographic provisions of service as well. CFL s annual report for 1946-47 lists five branches for whites and two (really a branch and a sub-branch) for blacks, 10 community deposits for whites and 13 for blacks, and one bookmobile for each race. By 1959-60, CFL had nine white branches and only two black branches, six community deposits for whites and two for blacks, and 81 bookmobile stops for whites and only 14 for blacks. For the main building and branches, the total hours of weekly opening for white users were 175 ½, while blacks from the entire county could access their two branches for a combined 54 hours (Annual Report 1959-60). From time to time the county appropriated money to help construct or renovate white branch



buildings, which were also partially privately financed.[30] During the period of library segregation the county never contributed to the construction or even renovation of a single black branch.[31]

It should therefore come as no surprise that although bookstock for blacks and black circulation as percentages of the whole reached their highest levels in 1947-48, by 1958-59, (the last year in which both figures were reported), they had declined markedly. By 1960-61 bookstock available to African-Americans comprised only 22.14% of the

[30]) For example, the CFL County or Regional Library Statistical report completed in 1947 for the Southeastern States Cooperative Library Survey shows the county had by then earmarked or spent $25,000 for the new Cooper River Branch and $10,000 for the new Mt.Pleasant Branch.

[31]) See, for example, the 1948-49 Library Statistical Report. (A new John L. Dart Library was finally built in 1968.)

whole, the third lowest percentage recorded, significantly below the 25.7% achieved in the beginning year of the Rosenwald demonstration. In fact, 1947-48 was the only year in which bookstock for blacks as a percentage surpassed its first-year level. By 1958-59 black circulation (132,132) was only 23.83% of the total (554,423). (See table and chart on pages 34 and 35.) It seems quite obvious that the lowered percentage of black circulation was caused by the overall decline in service, especially pronounced in terms of relative accessibility. Indeed the inadequate bookstock available to blacks was not only less than a quarter of the total, it was also probably less current. Annual withdrawal rates for the bookstock for blacks appear to have been almost uniformly lower than those for the bookstock for whites; (see table and chart below).

CFL Withdrawal Rates in Bookstocks for Blacks and Whites for Selected Years

Year	Withdrawals as % of bookstock for whites	Withdrawals as % of bookstock for blacks
1931-2	4.85	2.28
1932-3	5.20	4.07
1933-4	4.29	2.03
1934-5	2.97	1.27
1935-6	1.72	1.65
1949-50	2.06	3.82
1950-1	2.45	2.25
1958-9	2.55	1.80
1959-60	1.26	1.44
1960-1	1.88	0.93

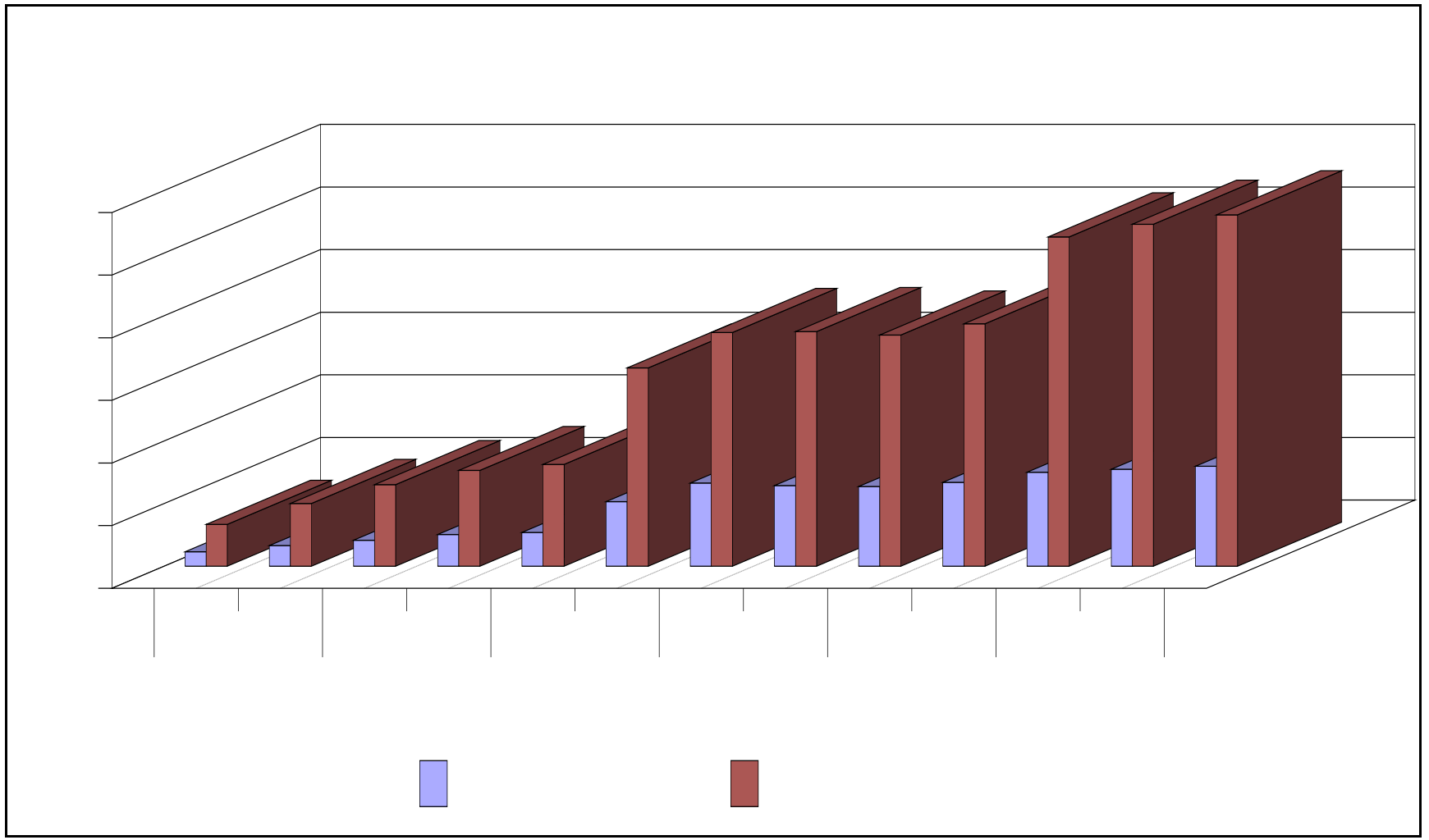
Source: CFL Annual Reports

CFL Bookstock, Circulation and Registration for Blacks as Percentage of Totals for Selected Years*

Year	Bookstock %	Circulation %	Registration %
1931-32	25.70	13.90	24.38
1932-33	21.80	10.79	24.84
1933-34	24.10	13.42	24.64
1934-35	24.90	16.89	28.50
1935-36	24.96	17.34	28.80
1946-47	24.57	31.50	20.74
1947-48	26.26	31.60	19.00
1948-49	25.57	27.70	21.48
1949-50	25.62	26.41	21.13
1950-51	25.68	25.50	18.62
1958-59	22.21	23.83	16.07
1959-60	22.09		17.42
1960-61	22.14		

* indicates no data available

Source: CFL Annual reports



Source: CFL annual reports

A review of the history of the period reveals that the agencies and organizations that might have encouraged and supported CFL and other South Carolina libraries in efforts to extend and equalize service to blacks failed to do so.

From 1935 to 1943 the federal government through the WPA (Work Progress Administration) conducted library extension programs in South Carolina, along with most of the rest of the U.S., to assist established library agencies in stimulating local reception of complete and permanent library service as a regular public function (Stanford quoting U.S. Work Projects Administration118). In South Carolina the WPA project, administered by white South Carolinians, aimed to extend library service to all parts of the state formerly without it; and in keeping with this goal, it undertook at the outset to make its facilities equally available to all counties alike (Gorman 432, Stanford 153). Even though they laid the groundwork for further library extension, if anything, the WPA activities further distorted the state s existing racial inequities. It should be remembered that in 1935 only three counties in the state offered any service to blacks (Frayser 25). In 1941 during its peak year, the WPA in South Carolina was operating 417 units,[32] 392 of which were servicing only whites, while 25 were servicing blacks. The WPA purchased 19,826 books for white use and 477 for black use. It furnished and operated 29 bookmobiles for whites and none for blacks (Stanford 158). A 1941 map shows 18 WPA Negro library service units in 10 counties. Five of these were in Charleston County, all tightly clustered around the city of Charleston (Stanford 181).

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[32]) Defined as a library, school, bookmending workshop, reading room, deposit station, or bookmobile in which WPA poject workers were involved (Stanford 158).

Without bookmobiles, it is hard to see how any of the WPA black service units could have had extensive impact, while the location of the Charleston County units seems particularly poorly planned in terms of increasing service to blacks in most of the county.

The ALA,[33] SELA, South Carolina Library Association and the State Library Board signalled mixed messages and, at best, offered lukewarm support that had little practical value. Though blacks could belong to SELA, explains Virginia Lacey Jones, former dean of Atlanta University s School of Library Service, provisions were not made for us [Negroes] to participate fully in the meetings and activities of the Association (39). The South Carolina Library Association, intimately entwined with the State Library Board in determining its policies and programs, did not admit blacks as members until sometime in the 1960s.[34]

The degree to which the State Library Board gave any assistance whatsoever to the development of library services to blacks during the 1940s and 50s can be illustrated by the following examples. Estellene P. Walker, director of the State Library Board (later the South Carolina State Library) from 1946 to her retirement in 1979, compiled in 1980 a history of South Carolina libraries. In the statewide portion, The Public Library in South Carolina 1698-1980" she omits all mention of black South Carolinians. Discussing the state board s aid to local libraries, she explains that the initial requirement for [a library s] participation in State Aid was that the service given by the library be county-

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[33]) In Race in American Librarianship Rosemary Ruhig DuMont details the less than exemplary history of the ALA in these matters.

[34]) I don t have an exact date, but Rosemary Ruhig DuMont s discussion of ALA s membership requirements vis à vis state library associations is strongly suggestive of this time frame (499-501).

wide. [. . .] (http://www.libsci.sc.edu/histories/vts/epw01.html). A rational person would conclude that county-wide should mean service to all persons in the county, including blacks. But the State Library Board did not mean this. For example, in 1949-50, when only 14 counties provided library service to blacks, 32 county libraries qualified to receive $1,000 each in state aid (*Seventh Annual Report* [3]).

In February 1951 Walker penned a letter to the editor of the *News and Courier* dismissing the volunteer movement for black Faith Cabin libraries[35] as a program that was definitely past history in South Carolina. Walker averred that County Libraries are now rapidly extending library service to Negroes through branches, stations and bookmobile service. Yet in 1954 the State Library Board reported that 479,716 South Carolinians, most of whom were black, still lacked public library service (*Eleventh Annual Report* 6)

In 1948 the State Library Board inaugurated a book deposit program for blacks, (*S. C. Library Bulletin* 1/48). They already had such deposits on loan in both the black and white bookstocks in Charleston County in 1946-7 (Annual Report). At that time the State Board deposit for whites was 3,200 volumes, while its deposit for blacks totalled 420 volumes. Throughout the period under study the South Carolina State Library Board book deposits, like those of the WPA earlier, only increased the existing racial service inequalities. See chart below.

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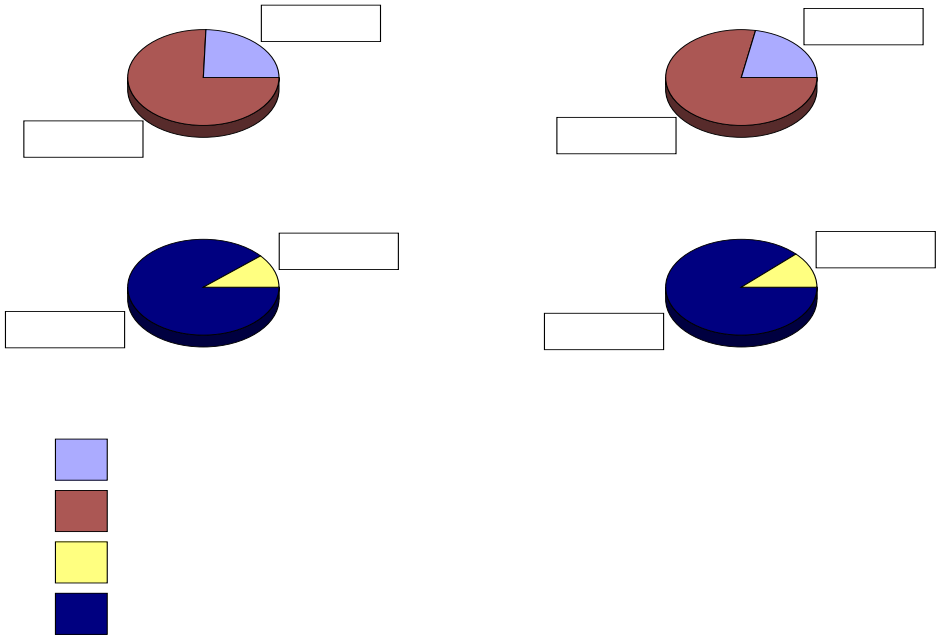
[35]) Through the efforts of a white South Carolina textile worker, the Faith Cabin library movement provided book collections for [107] rural black communities in South Carolina and Georgia during the segregation era (Lee Faith Cabin Libraries 169, 180).

Black and White % of Total Bookstock Compared to Black and White % of State Library Board Book Deposits
(Source: CFL annual reports)



There existed other more overarching and general factors which undoubtedly had an even stronger effect on library service to blacks in Charleston County. One might call them government, race, race and race. These in their totality acted to strengthen Jim Crow orthodoxy and eliminate the possibility of hopeful racial "wiggle room" for CFL.

In all likelihood the CFL board of trustees and administrators collectively belonged somewhere within the Southern progressive strain Patterson Graham (citing works by Dewey Grantham and William A. Link) discusses in the introduction to his 1998 dissertation, *Segregation and Civil Rights in Alabama's Public Libraries: 1918-1965.* Progressives were those modern but paternalistic Southerners who wanted to help blacks move forward, but only within the confines of "customary"[36] white Southern social norms (33-5). By any measure, the CFL organism did seem to locomote like the duck in question. Ranked in formidable opposition to any more egalitarian racial tendencies the trustees and librarian may have felt individually were these strong factors: 1) the weak governor system in South Carolina that gave the county legislative delegation control of all county expenditures, a process which both politicized and destabilized year-to-year funding;[37] 2) a rather narrow, closed Charlestonian orthodoxy which deplored deviation;[38] and 3) the state-wide (and regional) climate of increasing white racial

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[36]) Historian Van Woodward thoroughly demonstrates in *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* that the time-honored mores of Southern racial segregation were generally quite recent in origin, mostly from the 1890s onward.

[37]) The South Carolina General Assembly to which the Charleston County delegation belonged, was a hotbed of racial hate. In the 1940s, for example, in reaction to Judge Waring's judicial decisions (see next footnote) it repealed all state laws dealing with primary elections so that Democrats could continue to keep blacks from voting; and the Grand Dragon of the KKK was "warmly received" when he addressed the body by invitation (Quint 5, 7).

[38]) Judge J. Waties Waring, (cousin of race-baiting Thomas J. Waring) was a blue-blooded Charleston aristocrat whose life and beliefs were unexceptional until he ruled favorably in the above-noted cases affecting the civil rights of

(continued...)

animus, spurred by Strom Thurmond s 1948 Dixiecrat run for the Presidency and by federal court decisions favoring black civil rights, which began in South Carolina in the 1940s and culminated in the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision outlawing public school segregation in Brown v. Board of Education.

A fourth underlying factor which helped to drive or accentuate the other factors was the presence of a high percentage of blacks in the state s (and Charleston County s) population. Charleston County is a part of the Black Belt, a crescent of 623 coastal plain counties stretching from Virginia to Texas, which was the historical locus of most of the region s cotton farming. South Carolina and Mississippi as states had (and still have) the highest percentages of black residents. The Low Country, of which Charleston was the capital, comprises most of the state s Black Belt counties.

In *Southern Politics* (1949), a brilliant analysis of Southern voting patterns which is still the quintessential guide, V.O. Key offered these conclusions about South Carolina and the Low Country:

> The degree to which the race issue influences political life varies almost directly with the proportion of Negro population. Seldom do any political leaders speak up for Negroes, but in states with the highest proportions of Negroes, white-supremacy demagogues seem to be most strident. In states with fewer blacks, Negro-baiting, to be sure, occurs, but it seems that leaders most unrestrained in

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[38](...continued)
blacks in the 1940s and early 1950s. He was then shunned by white Charlestonians and lived the last years of his life as an exile in New York. Charleston society was pretty nice if you belong to it, Waring would say in his seventy-sixth year, but it s really a terrible social system. [. . .] It has a charm, a fashion, but it doesn t think much, and it doesn t think outside of its pattern. (Kluger 295-304, 366)

> denunciation of the Negro rise in the states with many blacks. South Carolina has had a succession of spectacular race orators who almost blanket out the achievements of its abler and more temperate leaders [. . .] While others shared their views, the politicians of South Carolina and Mississippi have put the white-supremacy case most bitterly, most uncompromisingly, most vindictively. (130)
>
> . . . . . .
>
> The fundamental basis for the latent [political] unity of the Coastal Plain perhaps rests in its more complete dependence on agriculture than the Piedmont and in the fact that its counties have the highest proportion of Negroes. (139)

Sociologist David M. Heer echoed these conclusions in his study of South Carolina voting patterns in the 1948 Presidential election when breakaway Dixiecrat candidate Strom Thurmond was the white man s dream. The fact that almost all of the state s blacks were disenfranchised made the white vote isolatable for study. Heer s statistical analysis proves:

> perhaps more rigorously than does any previous study of southern political behavior, that the will to preserve segregation as expressed by the whites at the ballot box varies both with the percentage of Negro population and the degree to which the white population lives on farms. (598)

I.e., the higher a county s black population, the stronger was its white vote for Thurmond. Both these researchers, though they do not acknowledge the debt, may have based their work on the implications of a socio-economic study carried out by Fisk sociologist Charles S. Johnson, a black man, in 1941. In *Statistical Analysis of Southern Counties* Johnson discovered a strong pattern in spending on public education among the 1104 counties:

> [S]tate funds allotted on a basis of *all* children of school age have been applied almost exclusively to the support of white schools. A large number of *Negro* children is a decided asset to the *white* school system, since the funds allotted for Negro children can be used for white schools

> and teachers. In general, per capita educational expenditures for white children are highest [in counties] when the number of Negro children is high, while per capita expenditures for Negro schools are lowest.

Johnson found a correlation of .42 between the per cent of the population which is Negro and the expenditures per white pupil enrolled and a correlation of -.51 between per cent Negro and expenditures for Negro schools (26). From these data on Jim Crow public education spending I hypothesize that the same sort of racial population relationship would govern all local spending for public services to blacks. So that, where the percentage of blacks is high the corresponding portion of expenditure for that service to blacks should be low. Although CFL s budget cannot be racially broken out, the black percentages of bookstock, hours of service, number of facilites and circulation present reasonable surrogates.

Postscript

Black sit-ins and demonstrations to integrate public libraries began in South Carolina in 1960. Some incurred strong reactions on the part of white governments: in the extreme case of Greenville, the city council and library board closed the library s doors for several weeks (Lee, From Segregation to Integration 104-5). In December of that year the new Charleston main library on Marion Square was quietly integrated (Negroes, Whites Use Library). The reactionary *Charleston News and Courier* blustered editorially:

> The experiment was undertaken by those in charge of the library on their own initiative, so far as The News and Courier can learn. We are aware of no pressure

> from federal government or other sources. Accepted so far without incident, the interracial use of the library is perhaps the most significant change in local race relations since the opening in 1948 of the Democratic primaries to Negro voters. That took place under orders of a federal court. (Integrated County Library)

A few days after Christmas a State Library Board employee (ds) wrote the following note after a phone conversation with CFL s head librarian:

> Miss Sanders called. The News & Courier is after them again, about integration. Just before Xmas the N & C published a very nasty article on the subject (written by the editors because the reporters refused to do it) & followed it with an equally obnoxious editorial. There is more in today s paper. Miss Sanders seemed unperturbed & said that she & Mrs. Fitch[39] felt that as long as they have the N & C s enmity they are on safe ground! (Note 12/30/60)

In 1960 Emily Sanders and her board clearly had opinions and beliefs regarding integration; and with the times sufficiently changed, they acted on them.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Eliza Atkins Gleason is enlightening. In *The Southern Negro and the Public Library* (1941) she followed Carlton Joeckel s lead[40] in affirming the centrality of the legal and governmental underpinnings of public libraries. But because her perspective was quite different, she pursued the issue all the way to the most overarching level: the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments in the U.S. Constitution which guarantee equal protection under the law and the right of all citizens to vote regardless of race or color. Her study showed that to a black librarian viewing the inequity of library service to blacks in the South, the obvious framework for a real solution is reliance on the U.S.

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[39]) Mrs. Girdler B. Fitch was Board Chair (Members of the Board of Trustees... [1960?]).

[40]) In the introduction to The Government of the American Public Library, Carlton B. Joeckel states, The major purpose of this study is to describe, analyze and evaluate the position of the public library in the structure of govemment of the United States (ix).

Constitution. She devoted the book s entire second chapter to The Legal Basis of Free Public Library Service to Negroes in the South. Gleason s eloquent and thorough analysis of the legal issues remarkably presaged the successful judicial arguments made by the Civil Rights movement years later in the battle to overturn Jim Crow laws and protect black voting rights (30-68).

Beginning immediately, even in the Rosenwald demonstration period, the goal of equal opportunities to both in practice became merely opportunities for both. As Dan Lee shrewdly observes in his history of South Carolina public libraries service to blacks, the provision of some degree of services was automatically validated as being equal to services offered to whites (From Segregation to Integration 103). And as the passage of time increasingly distanced CFL from its founding framework, the influence of the Rosenwald racial precepts appears to have become fainter. Indeed, Thomas W. Hanchett s evaluation of the Rosenwald Fund s historic impact on black education in the South seems apposite in the case of CFL:

> While the Rosenwald effort dramatically improved black rural school facilities, the program did not have the far-reaching impact that its originators envisioned. Rosenwald grants and black volunteerism at the local level proved no match for the attitudes of southern whites. School boards continued to let public investment in black education lag ever further behind that in white schools. (387-8)

Further study is needed on the issue of the vulnerability of libraries as dependent creatures of government. In the case of CFL the mechanism of government funding posed an implicit threat which may have acted to stifle improvement in services to blacks. State and local funding structures offer few problems (except insufficiency) when times

are good. But Jim Crow, apartheid, Nazi Germany and contemporary ethnic enmity in various world trouble spots point to the public library s political vulnerability. Following in the footsteps of Eliza Gleason, the contemporary public library community in the U.S. looks to the federal Constitution to protect users rights to freedom of information. But other issues affecting libraries may not have as strong a legal aegis, especially in the area of extending or supporting library service to unpopular or politically fraught minorities undocumented aliens (migrant workers), the homeless, gay teenagers, etc. It would be interesting to document how social attitudes and governmental funding restrictions are related (as, for example, in the area of public services to undocumented aliens in California). Do structures exist (or can they be designed) to at least partially insulate libraries from restrictive or unethical government mandates? Would clearly stated goals and guidelines from funding sources help libraries more adequately serve minorities? What might be optimal roles for both governmental and private funding agencies in helping to assure service to such minorities?

This study raises a final issue which deserves follow up. In the current post-Jim Crow era, in the light of Charles S. Johnson s findings regarding education funding inequities, do library services (and other public services) for blacks still suffer in counties and cities where blacks form a large percentage of the population? Library services could be assessed in terms of access (convenience of service points to black centers of population), hours of opening, racial makeup of staff, programming, representation of black issues and interests in the bookstock and the quality of staff interaction with black patrons.

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